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HRIST



NCAR

IN HIS FIRST COMING :
IN HIS EXALTATION :
IN HIS SECOND COMING

BEING

THREE LECTURES

PREACHED IN

St. Giles' Parish Church,

IN

ADVENT, 1867

BY

THE REV. T. V. FOSBERY,

VICAR.



LONDON :

RIVINGTONS, WATERLOO PLACE.

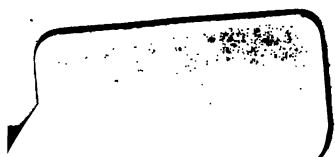
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THESE Lectures, which are given here only in outline, and which were, in the delivery of them, considerably amplified, seem to me hardly worth printing; but others wish to possess them, and perhaps they may, please God, be a little helpful, as suggesting a more practical use of the great truth which forms their subject, namely, the Abiding Humanity of Christ. We are apt to hold this truth as only an article of Dogmatic Theology, which, indeed, we are bound to believe and defend, but which is not calculated to influence our lives. And yet there is none of deeper or dearer import, or of stronger force, if humbly and reverently employed, to draw our hearts to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

T. V. F.



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And this great truth, of our Lord's Incarnation, which is derived not alone from separate passages of Holy Scripture, but from the whole tenor of the word of God, is faithfully preserved for us, by our Church, as a sacred deposit. For example, in the second Article of Religion. "The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, of her substance: so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God, and very Man." It would be nearly impossible to find language more clear and precise than that in which it is thus delivered to us. And yet there is here, you will observe, no attempt made to explain this great mystery. It is simply declared. What God has revealed, that the Church announces; where God keeps silence, the Church is reverently silent before Him.

Had this truth been committed to us to hold and to teach, because of its value in and for itself, and had it no interest for us but that which must belong to every revelation concerning the Being and Nature of God, we should have received it, in all its fulness, humbly and thankfully from Him. But the Incarnation of Christ is, to each one of us, of vast and unspeakable moment; it concerns us as no other event whatever can possibly concern us. The great changes in the world around us; the

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The Incarnation of Christ is one of the foundation truths on which our holy faith is built. God the Father has given us in His well-beloved Son, by His taking our nature upon him, One All-sufficient, to meet the varied necessities of man's condition, whether he be regarded as fallen, as redeemed, or as finally triumphant. St. Paul tells us that "as by man came death,"—so, as it was meet—"by Man came also the resurrection of the dead"; that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

We needed One, who being, as God, infinite in Himself, infinite in His perfections, infinite in the efficacy of His work, should, as Man, have the human capacity of suffering. One who should, as God, accept, in the strength of His Almighty will, and in the fulness of His unspeakable compassion, the task of our redemption, and who should, as Man, that is, possessed of a nature such as ours, be made capable of accomplishing this great work. In the councils of eternity Christ chose this office of Redeemer; and when the fulness of time was come, "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman," *i. e.*, absolutely human, to work out our redemption. When Christ came, He came prepared to carry out, Himself, this mighty purpose. It was not by constraint, but willingly, that He underwent all the consequent suffering and sorrow, when the "Lord laid upon Him the iniquity of us all." It was by the taking of the Manhood into God, for us men and for our salvation, that Christ was enabled to

stand in our place, to bear the punishment that we for our sins deserved to bear ; to satisfy, as God, the claims of His own justice and His Father's, and yet to achieve the purposes of mercy, His own mercy, and His Father's, by the great sacrifice wherein, as Man, He freely gave Himself up for us all. Thus essential for us was the Incarnation of Christ.

But again,—since Adam had by transgression fallen ; since he had lost that which had been entrusted to him, and was defeated, through his own self-will, by the powers of evil, we needed one who should take, instead of Adam, the headship of our race ; and who should be, in his encounter with Satan, not the vanquished, as Adam was, but the Victor. God has in mercy met this our great necessity, and the second Adam “is the Lord from heaven ;” man as truly as Adam was, and yet more than conqueror over man's great adversary.

Furthermore, amongst our many needs, was that of some one to look up to ; some perfect being, above our own ideal, and yet one of us. In all the false religions of the world, there is ever a blind groping after some human manifestation of this kingly strength, this consummate perfection. And all that we now call hero-worship and the like, the enthusiasm which fills us, the unbounded admiration that possesses us,—unreasonable though it often be,—when some man whom we think to be greater, wiser, or nobler than his fellows, appears,—testifies to the

yearning which God has implanted in us for a Leader, who should be at the same time one of ourselves, and yet infinitely above us. God, who gave us this instinctive desire, meets and satisfies it for us, in the Man Christ Jesus.

But besides all this;—as God has constituted us, we need Sympathy. By sympathy, it is obvious, something is meant widely different from pity. We give pity to those whom we feel to be, at the time, beneath us; we stoop to pity; and therefore there is no instinctive seeking after pity in the universal heart of man. The wish for it is simply morbid. But sympathy, which is not the feeling *for*, but the feeling *with* another, is what all hearts which are not perverted or degraded demand,—alas! how often in vain. Human sympathy, in its highest and noblest exercise, must be based upon an intimate knowledge of him to whom we accord it; we must understand his history, his temper, his peculiarities—all that gives a special character to his joys and his sorrows. We must have experienced like pain or grief ourselves, or at the least, have had their shadow falling darkly across our own path, ere we can sympathize with the sufferer. Meantime, the anguish that shoots through his heart so keenly, is an anguish so distinctively his own, that he feels it to be quite impossible that any other should know all its bitterness. And yet he needs this more perfect appreciation of his condition,—this more complete fellowship in his suffering; nay, he seems to divine that it exists

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care, more fully than we ourselves can do ; so experienced in human affliction, that He can bring with Him, when He comes to our side, the memory of a thousand varied griefs wherewith He was Himself exercised ; and so filled with tender, soothing, discriminating love, that to those who thus receive Him, sorrow loses its sting and pain its bitterness.

My brethren, these thoughts on the Incarnation of our Blessed Lord, are but a few of those which this great theme suggests. In the following lectures of this course we shall have occasion to call up many others. For Christ's exaltation is the crowning of the Incarnate Lord ; and Christ's return is the coming again to man of Him who is **THE MAN**. Thus, the subject of to-day's brief lecture, is in effect the subject of them all. May He, round whom our thoughts would fain gather during this Advent season, fulfil all His gracious purposes in us, through the power of His Spirit ; may He lift our hearts to Him in true adoration ; bend our wills into blessed conformity to His all perfect will ; and teach us to recognize in Christ Incarnate, the Glory and Majesty of "the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

LECTURE II.

THE EXALTATION.

PHILIPPIANS, II, 9, 10, 11.

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

THE Exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, is our theme this morning. He who is “God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God,” is also the Man Christ Jesus. And it is Christ’s Manhood which makes his Exaltation possible. As God he could not have been thus exalted. He has ever been Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent. “All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.”

But when the ever blessed Son took our nature upon Him, He was thenceforth, though “equal to the Father as touching His Godhead,” yet “inferior to the Father as touching His Manhood.” And it is this Manhood which

is now highly exalted. The Son, as Man, is capable of, and has received of the Father, this Exaltation. Two names were given Him when He came amongst us,—a divine and a human name; as though to impress upon us from the beginning of His earthly course, His two-fold nature. The first name is divine, “Emmanuel, which is being interpreted, God with us.” The second is human, “Thou shalt call His name Jesus.” It is as Jesus that our blessed Lord is exalted. And this name is specially a human name. It was that borne by Joshua, as you read in Acts, vii, 45. It was that borne by the son of Sirach. It belonged to many of the Jewish nation. It was not a name of new origin, given to a being whose nature was not our nature, but a man’s name given to a man, namely to The Man Christ Jesus.

Taking then the text and its context together, we are taught that Christ Jesus, “being in the form”—that is, in the nature and condition—“of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. (a) He did not take from the Glory

(a) “In the form of God” is not only a most inadequate rendering of ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ, but may lead to a very grave misinterpretation of the meaning of this passage of Holy Scripture, as though “form” was designedly used in contradistinction to reality of existence. But there seems to be no one English equivalent to μορφῇ, in the sense in which it is employed here.

The word “condition,” which I have ventured to use as amplifying the text, is of course to be taken not in its metaphysical, but in its ordinary acceptation; as when we pray for “all conditions of men.”

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ligion:—" Christ did truly rise again from the dead, and took again His body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith He ascended into heaven, and there sitteth until He return to judge all men at the last day."

Our belief in this truth being thus established on the sure foundation of Holy Scripture, it is not difficult to show further, the importance of the doctrine itself to us. He who is thus exalted is now our Mediator and Intercessor, as once He was the Sacrifice offered for us. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and He is the Propitiation for our sins. And therefore, when we address our prayers to God the Father, we close them with some expression of our belief in the intercession of Christ. We say "lead us to all things profitable to our salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord," or "mercifully grant that Thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts, through Jesus Christ," or "give us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord." Again, when we address our prayers directly to Christ Himself, we say, "Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Thou that sitteth at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us."

Now, we learn from God's own word, that He who sits enthroned in Glory, the "glory as of the only begotten

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heart knows, through its own past experience, how to feel with ours. The Apostle's exhortations to approach Him as such, are founded on the truth of His present Humanity, and of this, we very greatly need the fullest assurance. Our perverse hearts are but too ready to distrust the Saviour's love, to doubt the possibility of His being now to us, what He was to His disciples, while here below. We remember with what simple confidence they spoke to Him of their trials, their difficulties, and their doubts; and how good He was then to them; bearing with their weaknesses, their short-comings, and even their unbelief; so that His very chidings were marked with a marvellous tenderness. And then we say to ourselves, "O! that we had such an One to go to, as once Christ was, but now it is too late!" We are like Mary Magdalene at the tomb, when she said "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." We fail, through our unbelief, to realize Him as "The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" the same to each one of us—if we will but let Him be so—that He was to those among whom He went in and out when He dwelt on earth.

The enemy of our souls would keep us from Him. He would use our very consciences to this end, persuading us that there is an almost impassable gulf now opened up between us and Christ; that Jesus on earth, and Jesus in heaven, are not one and the same, but as it were, quite

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My brethren, it is a disbelief in the Abiding Humanity of Christ,—as perfect now in all its actings, as it ever was,—which draws away so many to seek to Christ's Holy Saints and to His Blessed Mother, for the help which they persuade themselves He will no longer, without such intervention, afford. They say that it is the sense of sin which deters them from a direct approach to Him. Do they really believe that, could they succeed in transmitting their petitions through others, their sins would thus become less sinful in His sight ? When He was on earth, would the penitent woman that was a sinner, have received through the interposition of those around, a fuller pardon than He graciously vouchsafed to her own mute appeal ?

But, if Christ be still what once He was, and that they cannot doubt the fulness of his compassion and sympathy, do they doubt the power of His prevailing intercession with the Father, He being co-equal in the Godhead with Him ? Nay, do they so greatly doubt it as to seek, in aid of it, the intercession of others, respecting whom we know nothing except that they have fallen asleep in Jesus. Is it the Manhood or the Godhead of Christ that they mistrust the most ?

Meantime, the Apostle St. Paul, divinely inspired, teaches us, because of Christ's present Humanity, to ap-

proach God not doubtingly, or through others, but with full trust in His mercy. "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

But let us now regard the truth, that Christ is still very Man, on another side.

We know not to what heights of blessedness man might not have attained but for the fall. Adam, created by God for holiness, was made for happiness too. But however great and good in his unfallen state, he was yet of the earth—earthy. The second Adam, the new Head of our race, is "the Lord from heaven." Through this Headship we look for infinitely greater happiness than we could ever, through Adam, receive.

But again: it is one of the strange contradictions to which we are prone, that however proud we may be of ourselves, we yet regard with a sort of compassionate contempt this nature of ours, because it is made up of body and soul. Many of the heathen philosophers of old taught that we should degrade and debase the body as much as possible; and even in Christian times, some of the early heretics denied that God was the Creator either

of man's body, or of the material world in which he dwells, so unworthy did these seem of Him. Some of this leaven of unbelief still exists amongst us. We perceive that everything around us is passing and perishing; and that this mortal frame, invaded by disease, worn by suffering, and enfeebled by old age, comes at the last through death to corruption: and as these spectacles of mortality are continually before our eyes, we are led to imagine that whatever is material is necessarily corruptible, so that that which is *matter*, as distinguished from *spirit* is therefore unfit to be the abiding dwelling place of the immortal soul. Hence come doubts as to the real resurrection of real bodies,—hence comes the insinuation that a spiritual body, that is, a body fitted to be the home of man's spirit hereafter, does not mean a body at all (*b*). Hence unspoken, but not the less absolute, incredulity, as to the *identity* of the man who lives here to-day and who dies and whose body we lay in the grave, with the man who shall hereafter rise from that grave to judgment. It requires a calm, steadfast faith, to face the difficulties which seem to surround these mysterious truths. We think, as I have said, so highly of ourselves, that we

(*b*) But compare verses 35 and 44, of 1 Cor. xv, with verse 49; and that again with Phil. iii, 20, 21.—But some man will say, how are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come? . . . It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body? . . . And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. . . . For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body; according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.

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LECTURE III.

THE SECOND COMING.

ACTS I, 9, 10, 11.

"And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up unto heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

THE first of these three Lectures was on the Mystery of the Holy Incarnation, wherein we strove to contemplate both the infinite love of Christ when He first took our nature upon Him, and the wondrous blessings which He thereby obtained for us.

The second Lecture was on the awful theme of Christ's Exaltation. He who became Man, when we were at our utmost need, and redeemed us,—living, dying, and rising again, as man and for man,—holds still the human body and soul in which He accomplished that mightiest work,

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could not have life eternal, unless God were to be Man Eternal." (a)

Our subject to-day, in this, the third and last Lecture of this Advent course, is the coming again of our Lord, in His glorious Majesty, to the earth, which for a season He has left.

The language of the text demands our deepest attention. While the disciples, having witnessed the Ascension of Christ, who was taken up from the midst of them, "a cloud receiving Him out of their sight," were yet wrapt in wonder and in awe, "two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Why stand ye gazing up into heaven; this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Let us mark the emphatic significance of these words. The disciples were taught by those shining Ones who stood by them, to look for the return of Jesus, not as though He were to come back so changed as to be indeed another; but to revisit the world as being absolutely the same. They learned that not all the glory attendant on His coming, should for a moment obscure the Humanity which he has taken to be for ever His own. "This same Jesus,"—the same—the very same,—and bearing still His human title. They might

(a) See a noble sermon by Archer Butler, on the Incarnation. First Series, page 16.

have said, This same Lord, This same divine Master, or even This same Christ;—but no ! the words, marvellous in their meaning, are “This same Jesus.” And then again, “He shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.” You mark the double emphasis, “*so come*,” and “*in like manner*.” (b)

That expression in one of our hymns is hardly borne out by Holy Scripture, which describes Him in his second appearing, as

. “A dreadful form,
With wreath of flame and robe of storm.”

Nay, surely we may believe that the terror of His coming will be immeasurably increased to the ungodly, because “He comes in man’s nature, and in man’s body, to judge men for the sins done in the body; to ask them how they dared to sully a nature thus dignified,—to degrade a nature which HE has borne in heaven, down to hell : to convince ungodly sinners that in every sin whereby they disgraced their own nature, they disgraced His nature too; that every sin of theirs against themselves, was an insult to Him who had identified Himself with them. For since He has taken unto Himself our Manhood, how

(b) οὗτος ὁ Ἰησοῦς . . . οὕτως ἐλεύσεται ὃν τρόπον
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terrible will the guilt appear, of debasing what He has chosen thus so greatly to honour."

It is revealed to us that if indeed we are found faithful, we shall be, from the time of His glorious appearing, "ever with the Lord." St. Paul speaks of this as though it were the crowning happiness of Eternity; "To depart and to be with Christ," even now before the resurrection, he counted far better than to abide any longer here. The blessed condition of the Saints, when on that great Day, soul and body shall be reunited, seemed to him altogether indescribable. The words heard by him when wrapt in vision, it was not possible for him to utter! But, however veiled from human intelligence are the special joys of the blessed, hereafter, nothing can be more undoubting than the confidence of St. Paul in the reality, as also in the high spiritual character of them all; and he turns again and again to this one revealed truth, which seemed to him to answer every desire, to supply every want: "And so shall we ever be with the Lord."

These thoughts, my brethren, carry us still further than our Lord's second coming. Beyond that wondrous time stretches the Eternity of God. In that Eternity, Jesus Christ, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," will be the joy of His people: "This same Jesus," with the human heart, to feel with our human hearts, evermore! For with whatever new capacities and powers we may hereafter be endowed, we shall be human still; yea,

more human than we are here. Here, alas, a lower nature strives to overmaster us, perplexing and harassing the souls of the faithful ; while the tempers and the lusts of the wicked, unchecked and undisciplined, debase them below the level of the beasts that perish. But there, the beauty and the blessedness of redeemed and glorified humanity shall shine without a cloud to mar its purity, and, Human still, our Lord shall be ever beside us.

My brethren, if, as we have before confessed, true sympathy is inexpressibly welcome to every true heart, while here in this world, what must not sympathy be in the life beyond ? The participation in immeasurable and still augmenting happiness, is a fellowship of joy to which we now are altogether strangers ; we seem unable even to apprehend worthily the thought of it. But in the good land unto which,—may Christ grant it,—we are journeying, where sympathy shall lose the last element of sadness that clings here to its name, and where to *feel together* shall ever mean to *rejoice together*, what tongue can describe the blessedness of the faithful ! There, “ this same Jesus,”—Human in the midst of humanity—shall be the centre to which all hearts shall turn ; and they shall bring to Him their “ exceeding weight of glory,” as once they brought the burden of their suffering and sorrow.

With the Resurrection, the Mediatorial kingdom is to end. “ The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death,”

when all rule and all authority and power, which exalted themselves against God, shall be put down ; and the whole work of Christ, as King over a world in revolt, shall be completed. And then He who once went forth “ conquering and to conquer,” shall bring His people, the fruits of His conquest, to the many mansions of His Father’s house, to share with Him the joys which He obtained for them ; and “ then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God”—the Triune God—“ may be all in all.”

Nevertheless, the Resurrection, wherewith the events connected with the Lord’s Second Advent are closed, is a beginning as well as an end. The reign over evil being ended, the strength of the Godhead is no longer manifested, through the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity in conflict with the powers of darkness ; for these are finally subdued. But now we are come instead, to the meeting-point of Time and Eternity. Hitherto, all God’s love and power, manifested in those mighty transactions whereby fallen man was redeemed, sanctified, and at the last raised from the dead, belonged to Time. But now “Time shall be no more,” and the Eternity of the future begins. We might well recoil, perplexed and amazed, from this ; for if Eternity be not merely an endless prolongation of time, but an altogether new condition of existence, we cannot yet grasp the thought of it, or derive any comfort from the prospect of an eternal Now. But does it not suffice us to know that Christ, in

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His well-beloved Son, to shine on into the remotest future ; going before us far as our farthest thoughts can travel ; the very Lord who, through His loving words and gracious deeds, we have long since learned to know so well.

And now, brethren, while we are confessing Him, not only in His Eternal Deity, but in this His abiding Humanity, are we daily growing “in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?” Do we live to Him, love Him, honour and serve Him? Have we any foretaste of heaven in our souls, while we strive to “follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth?” Is ours the happy persuasion, “That neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?” Truly “The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Let us cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light;” that so, when He who has revealed these truths unto us, and who testifieth these things, saith “Surely I come quickly,” our hearts may be ready with their rejoicing welcome; “Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus.”







